



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Department Certifies Cleanup of United Metal Recovery

Los Angeles --- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) announced today the certification of the United Metal Recovery (UMR) site located on United Street in Mojave, Kern County. Certification means that hazardous waste cleanup at the site is now complete.

Hazardous waste at the site was cleaned to an industrial health-based cleanup level and the site can now be developed for industrial/commercial purposes.

UMR was a metal recovery business that operated from 1963 to 1988 under various owners and operators. In 1988, soil samples were taken at the site by Kern County Health and the California Department of Health Services (DHS). Results from laboratory analyses of the soil samples taken indicated contamination with hazardous concentrations of lead, copper, zinc and dioxins/furans.

In 1988 DHS completed a Preliminary Assessment of the site as part of its investigation of the Rosamond Cancer Cluster. In 1989, DHS issued an Imminent and Substantial Endangerment Determination to the site owner and started cleanup actions which included stabilization of the site and the development of a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study.

DTSC took over the site and in 1993, approved a Remedial Action Plan which was implemented and completed in 1999. Cleanup activities were funded by the State's Orphan Site Fund. The final cleanup work involved the off-site disposal of non-hazardous debris; the excavation, on-site consolidation and capping of ash containing heavy metal and dioxin/furans contaminated soil and concrete.

During the course of the cleanup work, DTSC identified Potential Responsible Parties that included former owners and operators of the site. DTSC reached a cost recovery settlement with two former owner/operators and obtained a judgment from the federal court against a third former owner/operator for all past and future costs.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.